

CLAIMS:

1. A method of managing booting of a plurality of target devices in communication with a network, comprising:
 - 5 receiving, at a server in communication with the network, a request from at least one target device in a pre-boot stage;
 - assigning a current boot category to the target device, the current boot category based on the pre-boot stage of the target device;
 - generating a current boot list of target devices with corresponding 10 current boot categories; and
 - managing booting of the target devices using the current boot list.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
 - associating at least one command with the target device, the 15 command based on the current boot category.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
 - executing the command at the target device.
- 20 4. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
 - generating a command list comprising the command for the target device; and
 - selecting the command to be executed at the target device from the command list.
- 25 5. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
 - updating the current boot category of the target device based on the command.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
comparing the current boot category of the target device to a
predetermined expected boot category of the target device to determine a boot
difference between the expected boot category and the current boot category;
5 and
generating a boot difference list comprising target devices with
corresponding differences.

10 7. The method of claim 6 further comprising:
associating at least one boot difference command with the target
device, the boot difference command based on the difference.

15 8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
executing the boot difference command at the target device.

9. The method of claim 7, further comprising:
generating a boot difference command list comprising the boot
difference command for the target device; and
20 selecting the boot difference command to be executed at the target
device from the boot difference command list.

25 10. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
updating the current boot category of the target device based on
the boot difference command.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
storing the current boot list.

12. The method of claim 6, further comprising:
storing the boot difference list.

5 13. Computer program product in a computer usable medium for
managed booting of a plurality of target devices in communication with a
network, comprising:
means for receiving, at a server in communication with the network,
a request from at least one target device in a pre-boot stage;
10 means for assigning a current boot category to the target device,
the current boot category based on the pre-boot stage of the target device;
means for generating a current boot list of target devices with
corresponding current boot categories; and
means for managing booting of the target devices using the current
15 boot list.

14. The program of claim 13, further comprising:
means for associating at least one command with the target device,
the command based on the current boot category.

20 15. The program of claim 14, further comprising:
means for executing the command at the target device.

25 16. The program of claim 14, further comprising:
means for generating a command list comprising the command for
the target device; and
means for selecting the command to be executed at the target
device from the command list.

17. The program of claim 14, further comprising:
means for updating the current boot category of the target device
based on the command.

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18. The program of claim 13, further comprising:
means for comparing the current boot category of the target device
to a predetermined expected boot category of the target device to determine a
boot difference between the expected boot category and the current boot
10 category; and
means for generating a boot difference list comprising target
devices with corresponding differences.

15 19. The program of claim 18, further comprising:
means for associating at least one boot difference command with
the target device, the boot difference command based on the difference.

20 20. The program of claim 19, further comprising:
means for executing the boot difference command at the target
device.

21. The program of claim 19, further comprising:
means for generating a boot difference command list comprising
the boot difference command for the target device; and
25 means for selecting the boot difference command to be executed
at the target device from the boot difference command list.

22. The program of claim 19, further comprising:
means for updating the current boot category of the target device
based on the boot difference command.

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23. The program of claim 13, further comprising:
means for storing the current boot list.

24. The program of claim 18, further comprising:
means for storing the boot difference list.

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25. A system for managed booting of a plurality of target devices in
communication with a network, comprising:
means for receiving, at a server in communication with the network,
15 a request from at least one target device in a pre-boot stage;
means for assigning a current boot category to the target device,
the current boot category based on the pre-boot stage of the target device;
means for generating a current boot list of target devices with
corresponding current boot categories; and
20 means for managing booting of the target devices using the current
boot list.

26. The system of claim 25, further comprising:
means for associating at least one command with the target device,
25 the command based on the current boot category.

27. The system of claim 26, further comprising:
means for executing the command at the target device.

28. The system of claim 26, further comprising:
means for generating a command list comprising the command for
the target device; and

5 means for selecting the command to be executed at the target
device from the command list.

29. The system of claim 26, further comprising:
means for updating the current boot category of the target device
10 based on the command.

30. The system of claim 25, further comprising:
means for comparing the current boot category of the target device
to a predetermined expected boot category of the target device to determine a
15 boot difference between the expected boot category and the current boot
category; and
means for generating a boot difference list comprising target
devices with corresponding differences.

20 31. The system of claim 30, further comprising:
means for associating at least one boot difference command with
the target device, the boot difference command based on the difference.

25 32. The system of claim 31, further comprising:
means for executing the boot difference command at the target
device.

33. The system of claim 31, further comprising:
means for generating a boot difference command list comprising
the boot difference command for the target device; and

5 means for selecting the boot difference command to be executed
at the target device from the boot difference command list.

34. The system of claim 31, further comprising:
means for updating the current boot category of the target device
10 based on the boot difference command.

35. The system of claim 35, further comprising:
means for storing the current boot list.

15 36. The system of claim 30, further comprising:
means for storing the boot difference list.

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